

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) Within a telecommunications network, a method of processing half-calls each having opposing first and second ends, each of said half-calls being one of an originating half-call terminated at the first end thereof by calling consumer premises equipment and a terminating half-call terminated at the first end thereof by called consumer premises equipment, wherein an associated pair of half-calls connected at their second ends including both an originating and terminating half-call completes a call connecting the consumer premises equipment terminating the respective first ends of the half-calls that form the pair, said method comprising:

(a) applying identifiers to originating half-calls such that the originating half-calls are distinctly identifiable thereby with respect to one another, said identifiers thereafter accompanying terminating half-calls that form associated pairs of half-calls together with the originating half-calls to which the identifiers were applied; and

(b) examining terminating half-calls to detect the identifiers such that upon detection of the identifiers the terminating half-calls accompanying the detected identifiers and the originating half-calls to which the identifier were applied are recognized as associated pairs of half-calls.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

prior to step (a), receiving the originating half-calls from the calling consumer premises equipment over a packet-switched network;

translating the received originating half-calls from a packet-switched call format to a circuit-switched call format such that each originating half-call defines an originating half-call routing path having a packet-switched portion and a circuit-switched portion;

after step (a), directing the received originating half-calls to a circuit-switched network for routing;

prior to step (b), receiving the terminating half-calls from the circuit-switched

network;

translating the received terminating half-calls from the circuit-switch call format to the packet-switched call format such that each terminating half-call defines a terminating half-call routing path having a packet-switched portion and a circuit-switched portion; and,

after step (b), directing the received terminating half-calls to the called consumer premises equipment over the packet-switched network.

3. (Original) The method of claims **2**, wherein upon recognizing associated pairs of half-calls, the respective second ends of the half-calls forming each pair are connected to one another so as to reduce the originating and terminating half-call routing paths defined thereby to only their packet-switched portions.

4. (Original) The method of claim **2**, wherein upon recognizing associated pairs of half-calls, the respective second ends of the half-calls forming each pair are connected to one another so as to eliminate the circuit-switched portions from the originating and terminating half-call routing paths defined thereby.

5. (Original) The method of claim **1**, wherein the identifiers are audio watermarks, said audio watermarks comprising distinctly encoded signals applied to the originating half-calls.

6. (Original) The method of claim **5**, wherein step (a) comprises: superimposing the audio watermarks on traffic being delivered via the originating half-calls.

7. (Original) The method of claim **6**, wherein the audio watermarks are substantially unperceivable by end users employing the consumer premises equipment.

8. (Original) Within a telecommunications network, a call processing apparatus for processing half-calls each having opposing first and second ends, each of said half-calls being one of an originating half-call terminated at the first end

thereof by calling consumer premises equipment and a terminating half-call terminated at the first end thereof by called consumer premises equipment, wherein an associated pair of half-calls connected at their second ends including both an originating and terminating half-call completes a call connecting the consumer premises equipment terminating the respective first ends of the half-calls that form the pair, said call processing apparatus comprising:

application means for applying identifiers to originating half-calls such that the originating half-calls are distinctly identifiable thereby with respect to one another, said identifiers thereafter accompanying terminating half-calls that form associated pairs of half-calls together with the originating half-calls to which the identifiers were applied; and,

examination means for examining terminating half-calls to detect the identifiers such that upon detection of the identifiers the terminating half-calls accompanying the detected identifiers and the originating half-calls to which the identifier were applied are recognized as associated pairs of half-calls.

9. (Original) The call processing apparatus of claim 8, further comprising:

translation means for:

- (i) receiving the originating half-calls from the calling consumer premises equipment over a packet-switched network;
- (ii) translating the received originating half-calls from a packet-switched call format to a circuit-switched call format such that each originating half-call defines an originating half-call routing path having a packet-switched portion and a circuit-switched portion;
- (iii) directing the translated originating half-calls to a circuit-switched network for routing;
- (iv) receiving the terminating half-calls from the circuit-switched network;
- (v) translating the received terminating half-calls from the circuit-switch call format to the packet-switched call format such that each terminating half-call defines a terminating half-call routing path having a packet-switched portion and a circuit-switched portion; and,
- (vi) directing the translated terminating half-calls to the called

consumer premises equipment over the packet-switched network.

10. (Original) The call processing apparatus of claim **9**, wherein the translation means comprises a gateway bridging the packet-switched network with the circuit-switched network

11. (Original) The call processing apparatus of claim **9**, further comprising:

connection means for connecting half-calls recognized as associated pairs such that the respective second ends of the half-calls forming each pair are connected to one another so as to reduce the originating and terminating half-call routing paths defined thereby to only their packet-switched portion.

12. (Original) The call processing apparatus of claim **9**, further comprising:

connection means for connecting half-calls recognized as associated pairs such that the respective second ends of the half-calls forming each pair are connected to one another so as to eliminate the circuit-switched portions from the originating and terminating half-call routing paths defined thereby.

13. (Original) The call processing apparatus of claim **8**, wherein the identifiers are audio watermarks, said audio watermarks comprising distinctly encoded signals applied to the originating half-calls by the application means.

14. (Original) The call processing apparatus of claim **12**, wherein the application means superimposes the audio watermarks on traffic being delivered via the originating half-calls.

15. (Original) The call processing apparatus of claim **13**, wherein the audio watermarks are substantially unperceivable by end users employing the consumer premises equipment.

16.-21. (Canceled)